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Terror tutors from Mideast seize turf in Western Europe

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PARIS — Well-trained killers backed by funds from radical Middle Eastern countries are gradually taking over the weakened and ideologically inspired West European terrorist groups.

The objective, according to Western sources, is to destabilize Western Europe by spreading fear and thus force governments to bow to various demands generally aimed at "imperialism."

"Everyone is the target," headlined the French conservative weekly "Le Point." And it added: "Terrorists are often considered to be madmen. But even if they are mad, they are nonetheless capable of carrying out infernal plans."

Western intelligence services say that all signs point to Libya as the main financial backer of the "revived" underground network. Syria, they say, is the source of logistic support and Lebanon's Syrian-controlled Bekaa valley is the main training ground for hit squads dis-

patched to take charge of the wobbly West European terrorist organizations.

Iran's role is said to be more shadowy but growing steadily. Its aim is to reduce Western support and trade links with Iraq, which has been locked in a 5½-year-old "Gulf War" with the Ayatollah Khomeini's regime.

Meetings between the Palestinian Abu Nidal group and West European terrorists have reportedly taken place in Switzerland. These groups include the French "Direct Action,"

the "Red Army Faction" of West Germany and Belgian "Communist Fighting Cells."

All have been eroded by defections and the waning enthusiasm of their European members but have maintained organizational links. They are now being taken in hand by professionals not interested in distributing tracts or in symbolic attacks but in spreading real and merciless fear.

France is considered the number one target, particularly of Iran, whose agents are believed to have

been involved in last week's Paris bomb explosions which wounded 21 persons and caused a massive security alert.

Iran's objective, again according to Western intelligence analysts, is threefold — to recover an estimated \$1 billion of Iranian funds frozen in France after the Islamic revolution, to force the French government to cut its flourishing trade relations with Iraq and to free Iranian terrorists serving life sentences for an attack on former premier Shapour Bakhtiari.

President Francois Mitterrand and his key officials have vowed to "stand firm" in the face of this new offensive, which comes in the middle of the campaign for the March 16 legislative elections expected to unseat the socialist government.

Conservative and right wing politicians have been exploiting the issue, accusing the government of laxity in fighting terrorism.

French officials say that "reasonably accurate" information

about terrorist plans is filtering through from moderate Palestinian groups alarmed by the new surge of the "radicals." According to some sources, much information has been relayed by Eric Rouleau, French ambassador in Tunis and former correspondent of the respected daily Le Monde, a man with extensive Arab contacts.

This information has apparently enabled the French police to take precautionary measures and "look in the right direction."

Abu Nidal himself has been quoted as saying that "The imperialists are uniting and are fighting us everywhere so we also have become united."

His organization — said to be the most deadly efficient terror group operating anywhere — has report-

edly received \$14 million from Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi.

The French government itself does not mince words about the source of terror threatening the country. Last week Exterior (Foreign) Affairs Minister Roland Dumas said bluntly, "We have been able to ascertain that the lines of communication [of terrorists] go to two or three capitals: Tehran, Damascus, Beirut . . ." However, he did not name Libya's capital of Tripoli.

In short, Western Europe is faced by what is known as "institutional terrorism" and feels highly vulnerable. Gone are the days of youthful idealists, bungling amateurs in quest of a utopian society on the ruins of the present order.

The current phenomenon has little room for amateurs. It is always ready to exploit their enthusiasm — provided it fits with objectives that have nothing to do with Europe itself.

According to some Western sources, the Middle Eastern backers of this new form of "Euroterrorism" have also recruited the "Armenian Army for the Liberation of Armenia" (ASALA). A meeting between Palestinian terrorists of the Abu Nidal group and ASALA representatives apparently took place in Damascus under the auspices of Syrian General Mohammed al Khouli.

Little is known about its European goals, but French authorities are bracing themselves for more attacks by Armenians clamoring for revenge for World War I massacres by the Ottoman Turks.

Many Frenchmen point out that France is paying a steep price for its generosity in granting asylum to political fugitives. It now has some 5,000 exiles of various persuasions on its territory, making the country a battleground for distant causes.